UNITED
NATIONS

S

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/24024
27 May 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 27 MAY 1992 FROM THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

It is my urgent responsibility and duty to bring to Your Excellency's immediate attention the continuing tragic situation in our Republic, increasingly made more desperate by unabated aggression and serious obstacles to distribution of critically needed food, medicine and other humanitarian relief supplies.

By 15 May 1992, date of the Security Council resolution 752, the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina had already become the victim of the most naked and barbaric form of aggression of any sovereign State against another since the dark days of World War II.

Our civilian population had been subjected to a comprehensive fascistic effort of "ethnic cleansing" marked by cultural genocide, forced deportations of hundreds of thousands, and the eradication of its multi-cultural and religious heritage. Small and large population centres, in particular Sarajevo and Mostar, have been systematically deprived of food, medical supplies and clean water, while being subjected to a medieval form of siege characterized by a coordinated effort to murder through bombardment and starvation.

The United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and other relief organizations had attempted to deliver desperately needed humanitarian supplies. They had received assurances of safe passage from Yugoslav Army and Serb paramilitary forces, only to have the relief go undelivered due to hijacking, looting and other attacks resulting in loss of innocent life and supplies.

We were hoping against our own worst suspicions that resolution 752 would have a real impact in deterring further aggression by the Belgrade regime and its tools, the "Yugoslav" or Serbian National Army and their affiliated irregulars.

However, the aggression continues undeterred, with its focus rotating from one geographic target to another, and with ever-increasing segments of the population facing starvation and desperately needing medicines, including insulin for 35,000 diabetics, and clean water. Relief convoys still are not getting through to those in need; such intimidation by Serb-led forces must be halted.

Further acts of mass murder and genocide have been perpetrated in several smaller towns and villages as the ever-increasing campaign of ethnic cleansing continues. To seek enforcement of his ultimatum, the military leader of the so-called "Serbian Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina" threatened yesterday to use 30 military jets, provided by his benefactor in the Belgrade regime, against the people and legitimate leadership of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The population of Dobrinja, a Sarajevo suburb, has been reduced to a pitiful humanitarian condition as they desperately seek, and ultimately beg for, airlifts of bread into their community under siege. Abused by psychological warfare, time and time again the citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina are led to believe that they can come out of their shelters to seek food and breathe air, and are then attacked relentlessly.

This very morning, the aggressors fired three mortar bombs into a crowd of our citizens queuing for food in Sarajevo, killing almost 30 persons and wounding at least 160, in one of the most brutal assaults in two months of war.

This latest attack came only hours after the Russian Foreign Minister brokered an agreement to reopen Sarajevo airport so relief supplies could be transported to our people who are facing starvation and disease. Regrettably, the aggressor forces reneged on their promise and failed to comply with the accord to open the airport. Yesterday the aggressors shelled and set on fire the main maternity hospital in Sarajevo, a secular institution which served all ethnic groups, forcing 200 mothers, babies and hospital staff to flee to the basement.

The cynical, calculated timing of the attack on the food line and maternity hospital, and refusal to reopen the airport, is an affront to humanity that should be deplored and condemned.

Considering this systematic, ongoing campaign of intimidation, fear and massacre, it is obvious that further steps must be taken to even minimally implement the noble goals and intentions of resolution 752.

First, if the world community is not currently willing to take military action against the aggressor forces of the Belgrade regime and their surrogates, we reluctantly urge the enactment of comprehensive economic sanctions under Chapter Seven of the United Nations Charter. We are saddened by the impact that these steps may have on the civilian populations of Serbia and Montenegro, because we feel that the Belgrade regime will not be deterred even by the suffering of its people in its ultra-nationalistic fantasy to create a greater Serbia with absolute power.

None the less, this may be the only initial step to demonstrate to the Belgrade regime that the international community is determined to stop and reverse the aggression.

Second, because the desperate humanitarian tragedy cannot await the outcome of economic sanctions, and in furtherance of resolution 752, we urge that:

(a) Sarajevo airport be placed under international control to ensure uninterrupted flow of humanitarian relief without the intimidation now being applied.

(b) Relief supplies and humanitarian aid be distributed from Sarajevo airport under effective international security to ensure the critically needed supplies are delivered to the war victims.

(c) All heavy weaponry of the Yugoslav army and Serbian paramilitary forces should be placed under international supervision, especially at critical areas such as the points of distribution of relief. Supplies should be allowed to be delivered unhindered, and innocent people must be protected at distribution points.

(d) No military aircraft of the Yugoslav forces should be allowed to fly over the internationally recognized airspace of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Finally, we urge the Security Council to undertake concrete measures on this urgent problem and to empower Member States and appropriate regional organizations, as well as the Secretary-General, to take necessary steps to bring about the application and realization of the above-mentioned goals.

In view of the intolerable crisis in the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the continued suffering of our people who are in danger of death and starvation, we request urgent consultation with members of the Security Council, with a view to the Council taking such measures as may be deemed appropriate, to end this brutality.

I would be grateful if you would have this letter circulated immediately as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Haris SILAJDZIC
Foreign Minister